

Panel backs zoning for controversial lakefront high-rise

By Gary Washburn
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

A City Council committee Tuesday advanced a zoning change that would clear the way for a posh, but controversial, high-rise on a prime lakefront site.

One neighborhood resident complained that approval would benefit only the "elite few" who could afford the tower's lofty prices, while Rosalind Hecim, president of the

Streeterville Organization of Active Residents, asserted that the building would "help destroy the character of Lake Shore Drive, the lakefront and the legacy that will be left for all of Chicago."

But Ald. Burton Natarus (42nd), said the residential development, planned for an undeveloped site on Lake Shore Drive between Ohio and Ontario Streets, will make a positive contribution to the area.

"We have suffered with this va-

cant lot for almost 20 years," said Natarus, whose support as local alderman is essential for approval of the zoning change. The building plan has been scaled down to 49 stories from 53 proposed originally. A 79-floor development was approved for the site in 1986 but never built.

The new high-rise, planned by Howard Robinson of Atlantis Properties Ltd., is to have 18 three-story townhouses occupying the first

nine floors, topped by 234 condominiums. All of the residences are designed with three bedrooms and a minimum of 2,500 square feet of living area each. Prices are pegged from about \$800,000 to \$2.25 million.

The high-rise, with a limestone base beneath a precast concrete tower, will be of "landmark quality," architect George Pappageorge told the committee.

But opponents, seeking a less imposing building for the site, pre-

dicted increased congestion and air pollution in the area, a tower out of scale with nearby buildings and problems that will affect visitors to the Chicago Park District beach across Lake Shore Drive to the east.

The building "will reduce the use and enjoyment" of the lakefront, agreed Erma Tranter, executive director of Friends of the Parks, whose letter of opposition was read at the meeting.

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Jhi Vernetta
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I left a copy for
Fred and Larry.

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